



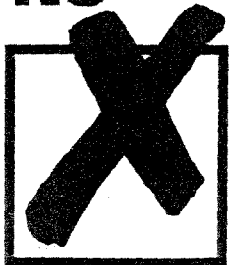
IT'S A BAD IDEA.

**We need to do more to keep alcohol
away from minors – not make it easier.
Vote NO on Question 1.**

A question has been put on the November ballot that will significantly change the way alcohol is sold in Massachusetts. The Wine In Food Stores ballot measure will dramatically increase minor's access to alcohol while providing no additional resources for increased law enforcement.

The truth about Question 1:

- It more than doubles the number of licenses to sell alcohol, allowing 2,879 new licenses to sell wine.
- The majority of these new licenses will go to convenience stores, drug stores and even some gas stations. Only about one-third will go to supermarkets
- These stores employ fifteen and sixteen year olds who will now have easy access to alcohol and be responsible for policing their classmates
- Will lead to increases in drunk driving, underage drinking and violent crime.

**Vote NO
on 1** 

Peabody

Liquor store owners pan wine sales in supermarkets

By ALAN BURKE
STAFF WRITER

PEABODY — Peter Kessel lifted a supermarket shopping bag and asked Peabody police Lt. Marty Cohan, "If I was a 19-year-old leaving a package store would you have the (legal) authority to stop me and search me?"

"Yes," Cohan said.

Kessel quickly changed the venue. "At a grocery store? Would you have the same authority?"

"No," Cohan glanced to the bag.

"You could be carrying anything."

Kessel, a package store owner from Rehobeth and vice president of the Massachusetts Package Store Association, nodded, hoping he'd made his point — that allowing supermarkets to sell wine would make it easier for minors to get their hands on it.

Along with a small group of package store owners, Kessel appeared before the Licensing Board last night to argue against a referendum question on the November ballot that would allow wine to be

sold at supermarkets. No representative of the campaign to allow it was present, although board members promised they would be invited to give their side at a later date.

"We should, in all fairness, get the other side," Chairman Minas Dakos said.

The new law would virtually double the number of wine licenses available, Kessel said, with an additional 14 in Peabody alone. "And 85 in the immediate area. ... Right now, you don't have to go very far one way or the other to

get alcohol."

In a supermarket, he warned, employees are often young and inexperienced. Moreover, they don't have the same incentive to prevent underage drinking as a liquor store owner. If the store violates the law, they'll merely be forced to stop selling alcohol for a period of time.

"If we get closed down, it's devastating," said Sean Donovan, owner of Bung-hole Liquors of Peabody and Salem. Nothing is sold for that period.

"They're saying this is convenient," Kessel said. "I keep hearing convenience. If it's so convenient, why do we need a license? Why not have it the same as water or Pepsi cola?" But the law recognizes a need to control alcohol, he said.

"It was never meant to be convenient."

Granting the license would be up to local boards, Kessel said. "But these guys have a lot of money. They can appeal."

While the current law grants licenses to Massachusetts residents only, he said, the new measure

wouldn't even require American citizenship, opening the way for companies like European-owned Stop & Shop.

For his part, Dakos seemed convinced. "This is definitely not in the best interest of the city," he said. "I don't see any good coming out of it."

Stressing that it was his personal opinion — and not the department's — Cohan pointed out that it's already too easy for people to drink.

"Do they want drive-throughs?" he asked.



TOWN OF SEEKONK

INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
PAUL E. LEMONT, ESQ.

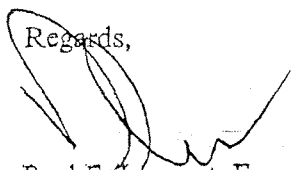
August 28, 2006

Surrounding Local Licensing Authorities:

At a meeting of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Seekonk on Wednesday, August 23, 2006, it was unanimously voted to recommend rejection of the Wine in Food Stores ballot measure (Question 1) on the November ballot, and to notify nearby communities of the vote as well as to ask you to take similar action. The vote followed a presentation by a number of local businesses who voiced their concerns over the unfavorable impacts that would occur if this matter passes.

If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,


Paul E. Lemont, Esq.

cc: Board of Selectmen
Chris Gasbarro
John Brady
Jim Mochler

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Monday, August 28, 2006

LOCAL

THE TIMES A3

Seekonk selectmen come out against supermarket wine sales

By DONNA KENNY KIRWAN
For The Times

SEEKONK — Concerned that a convenience for shoppers could turn into a headache for public safety officials, the Board of Selectmen voted Wednesday to oppose a November ballot question that would allow for the sale of wine in grocery stores and other retail outlets.

Maintaining that it would increase consumer convenience and prompt lower prices through increased competition, a coalition of grocery store owners petitioned the question on to the ballot of the Nov. 7 state election.

If Question 1 on the ballot is approved by voters, it would still be up to each city and town's elected officials to decide whether to issue an

license to an individual establishment.

In Seekonk's case, the Board of Selectmen not only wants to be on record as opposed to the proposal, but also wants surrounding municipalities to join in the effort to defeat Question 1. The board unanimously voted to send letters to neighboring cities and towns asking them to consider the negative ramifications of the proposal.

At Wednesday's selectmen meeting, several liquor store owners and industry representatives aired their concerns about the proposal and refuted claims that have been made by its proponents.

John Brady, the owner of Boutique Wines, argued that the present number of alcohol sales licenses is "more than ample" to serve the town's

population of 13,000. He added that it is "inappropriate" for grocery stores "to do this type of end-run" and urged the board to defeat the proposal.

Jim Mohler, the owner of Landry Liquors, maintained that with the wording of the proposal, the new license classification could apply not just to grocery stores but to any type of business that sells food — including gas stations and convenience stores. He also said that while the current proposal only involves wine, "the beer industry will soon get on the bandwagon."

Mohler also pointed out that an expansion in the number of stores that sell wine will make it easier for underage teens to obtain it. "If we let this go into law, we're all in for a rude awakening as far as

safety goes," he stated.

Peter Kessel, vice president of the Massachusetts Package Store Association, demonstrated how easy it would be for teens to switch the contents of a soda carton with that of a bottle of wine or one of the new canned wine products. They could then just pass the carton through a scanner at a self check-out, he said.

Kessel also argued that wine is a controlled substance that should be carefully monitored. It is not, he said, something that should be made "too normal by putting it next to the cornflakes."

Dana Gaebe, a longtime resident who is also an attorney, expressed concern that the ballot question will pass due to voters' liking the convenience of being able to buy a bottle of wine to go with

their dinner. "They're not thinking about the 17-year-old kid who can get his hands on it," he said.

Selectman Chairmen Michael Brady, who is a police lieutenant in Rehoboth, spoke of the difficulty police officers would have in checking for suspected underage drinkers emerging from grocery or retail stores. He also said that in his line of work, he has witnessed the tragic consequences that can result from underage drinking, and stated, "I can't in good conscience support this."

Selectman John Whelan, who put the discussion on the agenda, said he is "adamantly opposed" to the proposal. He noted that wine "is a controlled substance and we

could potentially lose control if this passes."

Selectman David Viera also expressed concern about the matter, and wondered how the grocery stores and other large retailers would ensure that only clerks of a legal age would handle the wine sales.

Selectmen resist wine-sale question

The board is unanimous in its condemnation of a November ballot that would allow wine sales in grocery stores.

BY C. EUGENE EMERY JR.
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

SEEKONK — The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously last night to oppose a November ballot question that would allow stores that sell food to sell wine as well.

It also decided to send letters to officials in neighboring towns encouraging them to also work against Question 1, characterized as an "act to increase consumer convenience."

"Every government office I've seen, from the ABCG [the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission], to the legislature, to the Senate, to the governor's office is against this," said Selectman Chairman Michael H. Brady. Much of last night's meeting was devoted to rebutting arguments made in The Journal by a spokeswoman for the grocery store owners, who gathered enough signatures to get Question 1 on the ballot.

After one package-store owner warned earlier this month that the proposed law would encourage teens to hide liquor in cases of soft drinks and escape detection through the automated checkout system, spokeswoman Kimberly Hinden called it "a scare tactic."

"It will be difficult to shove a bottle of wine in a Coke case," she said. So when Peter Kussel, vice president of the Massachusetts Package Store Assoc. appeared last night, he brought along a 12-pack of Coca-Cola. Buried amid the cans of Coke was a full-sized bottle of wine.

And four cans of wine. Letting grocery stores sell wine makes alcohol sales "very hard to police, very hard to stop. This is how alcohol gets into the hands of the dangerous," he said. "If we make it too normal, next to the corn flakes, the wrong message is being communicated."

Hinden had said the ballot question only applies to grocery stores. James Mohler of Landry Liquors said that's not what the proposal says, and a wine license could go to "any type of business that sells canned goods, foods of any sort, which means gas stations in town. Brady, a police officer, said if an officer sees someone under 21 coming out of a package store, there is good reason to ask to inspect the package. If someone comes out of a grocery story with a bag, "there's no way to reasonably believe there's alcohol in there." Hinden has said "consumers favor this measure 2 to 1" and lower prices sparked by more competition "could save buyers up to \$36 million per year." Mohler said the social costs could be far higher.

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Bay State to consider doubling wine in grocery, convenience stores

"It doubles the places where we would have to seek enforcement," says Somerset Police Chief Joseph Ferreira. "Obviously, the more places you have, the greater the burden."

BY C. EUGENE EMERY JR.
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

SOMERSET — Bay State residents will be asked in November to vote on a measure that could give grocery stores, convenience stores and even gas stations the chance to sell wine. Proponents say approval would be a boon to consumers, who find it easier to pick up their favorite wine. It would ultimately require each city or town to actually license individual stores. But opponents, led by local liquor establishments, are warning that the change would likely increase teenage access to alcohol, make it far more difficult to enforce liquor laws, and be the first step toward doubling the number of stores that can also sell beer and hard liquor.

Two area package store owners and the executive director of the Massachusetts Package Stores Association showed up at last night's Board of Selectmen's meeting to warn officials about Proposition 1, predicting that it would be the subject of a huge media campaign to get it ratified.

If it's passed, said Christopher Gasbarro, who owns stores in Seekonk and Swansea, "we will literally have alcohol available on every street corner."

The ballot question would allow each city and town to issue at

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Wine

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least five such licenses, with an additional license for every 5,000 residents.

Based on their populations, the number of grocery or convenience stores selling liquor would be as high as 8 in Swansea and Somerset (which currently has 9 package stores), 7 in Seekonk and Rehoboth, 6 in Dighton, 23 in Fall River, 13 in Attleboro and 10 in North Attleboro.

"We're looking at more than doubling the number of licenses out there," said Frank Anzalotti, the package store association official.

It didn't take much of a sales pitch to make some Somerset officials wary of the referendum.

"I think once we lose control and we have so many places where it's available, it's no longer a convenience, it's a nuisance," said Selectwoman Eleanor Gagnon.

"It doubles the places where we would have to seek enforcement," said Police Chief Joseph Ferreira. "Obviously, the more places you have, the greater the burden."

The ballot question provides for no additional resources to help the police keep tabs on the additional liquor establishments in town.

Scott Smith of Indian Springs Liquors, 3055 County St., said studies have repeatedly shown that when grocery and convenience stores are allowed to sell liquor, it becomes easier for those under 21 to get their hands on it.

Such stores, for example, routinely hire workers under 18, who would be under tremendous peer pressure to sell to their friends, he contended.

Anzalotti said in a recent study done in Hawaii, 15 percent of the

package stores were found to have sold to minors. The rate was 22 percent for grocery stores and a whopping 53 percent for convenience stores.

Smith predicted that approval of Question 1 would be a boon to liquor advertisers hoping to market their brands to youngsters.

"You'll be subjecting young children to this type of potential display advertising next to the candy or the soda. There are no rules and regulations on it," he said.

Proponents "will stress convenience. But weigh all the public safety and cost factors into what that convenience will be," he said.

Adding to the reluctance of a grocery or convenience store to enforce the liquor laws is the fact that such businesses risk less if they sell to children.

If a local package store is disciplined for an underage sale, Gasbarro said, the cost to that business can be crippling. But for a convenience or grocery store, many of which are owned by huge chains, the only consequence will probably be closing off one aisle for a while.

"Don't think we're safe with kids because it's only wine," warned Anzalotti. "If it's there and accessible, they'll drink it."

And although the ballot question only talks about selling wine, "you can bank on the fact that the major brewers will be coming out next and declaring foul" so beer can be sold the same way, he said.

Gasbarro said some grocery stores have tried to address some of the criticisms by promising to have just one checkout line dedicated to liquor sales.

But the latest trick some teens are using, said Gasbarro, is to remove soda cans from a case, substitute beer, and then take their purchase through the automated scanner.

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SECTION D

WINE, BEER, AND LIQUOR

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2006

Massachusetts debates grocery-store wine sales

A key issue in the voting on the ballot question could be whether a change in the law would increase underage drinking.

BY C. EUGENE EMERY JR.
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Liquor-store owners are offering misleading information in an effort to defeat a November ballot question that would permit wine sales in grocery stores, a spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Food Association, which is promoting the referendum, said yesterday.

Kimberly Hinden said package-store owners are using unfounded concerns about underaged drinking as a smoke-screen to try to defeat Question 1 when it comes up for a vote in November.

Critics of Question 1 are warning that approval would increase teenage access to alcohol, make it far more difficult to enforce liquor laws, and be the first step

toward doubling the number of stores that can also sell beer and hard liquor.

But Hinden said the vast majority of underage drinkers are not interested in wine. Massachusetts grocery stores that already sell alcohol do an excellent job of preventing sales to minors, and the 35 states that allow grocery stores to sell wine actually log 17-percent fewer violations for underage drinking.

Grocery stores in Massachusetts have been fighting unsuccessfully for two decades to get the state legislature to permit wines sales. Question 1 got on the ballot through voter initiative.

"We decided to bring this message directly to the people. We want to get

wine in food stores because we think it makes sense," Hinden said.

The ballot question only addresses wine because "wine goes with food" and customers have overwhelmingly said they want the convenience of buying it at the supermarket, she said.

She said "consumers favor this measure 2 to 1" and lower prices sparked by more competition "could save consumers up to \$36 million per year."

Yet Hinden had no estimate of how much association members expected to make if the proposal is passed.

It would be up to each city and town to decide whether to grant a license to indi-

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2006

Wine

Continued from Page D1

vidual grocery or convenience stores, and there's no guarantee that officials in individual communities would buy into the concept.

Hinden said the intent is to only allow wine sales in grocery stores.

Opponents, who presented their case before the Somerset Board of Selectmen Wednesday night, said the proposal would also permit sales from convenience stores and predicted that wine sales would soon give way to beer and other alcohol products.

Hinden said she could not promise that grocery stores would not try to expand their offerings to beer and hard liquor in the future, but she said it's been a 20-year battle just to get this proposal on the ballot.

A key issue in the debate could be whether a change in the law would increase underage drinking.

The opponents asserted Wednesday that grocery and convenience stores would be less motivated to prevent sales to people under 21 because they don't depend on liquor sales for their

livelihood.

Hinden called that argument a "smokescreen" that could easily be turned on its head.

Package stores, because liquor determines their bottom line, "have more incentive" to sell to children and young adults, she said. "Grocery stores don't need to sell wine to stay afloat."

She predicted that supermarkets "are going to do a better job monitoring their sales" because they have more employees. She also said underage drinkers would be more fearful of encountering teacher, coach or friend's parent in a grocery store and being busted.

In addition, she said, many stores have dedicated liquor registers to prevent abuse.

On Wednesday, package-store owner Christopher Gasbarro said the latest trick some teens are using in grocery stores where liquor purchases are permitted is to remove soda cans from a case of soda, substitute beer, and then take their purchase through the supermarket's automated scanner.

Hinden called that "a scare tactic. It will be difficult to shove a bottle of wine in a Coke case."

Gasbarro and his colleagues said a study in Hawaii found that 15 percent of the package stores

sold to minors compared to 22 percent of the grocery stores and 53 percent of the convenience stores.

Hinden said the liquor-store owners are citing data from Hawaii because numbers closer to home show that grocery stores do as good -- if not a better job -- of enforcing the law.

In 2003 and 2004, according to a report commissioned by the Massachusetts Food Association, 77 of the 119 violations logged by the state were in package stores, versus only 4 for grocery stores. The number was 37 for convenience and variety stores.

That means 65 percent of the violations were at package stores, versus 3 percent for grocery stores.

However, that percentage is misleading because there are roughly 20 package stores for every grocery store with a liquor license, so the number of package store violations could easily be higher.

Realistic numbers are not available because Massachusetts does not have a system for recording the results of sting operations, where trained people under 21 are sent into stores to see if they can buy liquor.

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Liquor store owners are not offering misleading information or using unfounded concerns to encourage the defeat of Question 1 in November. The following points and the attached documentation are factual and should be available to the informed voter.

1. Creating 2879 new licenses to sell wine in Massachusetts will cause significant increases in alcohol related problems. Researcher Alex Wagenaar from the University of Minnesota studied seven states that allow wine sales in grocery stores. All of them saw a dramatic rise in consumption, up to 150%. Several other research studies confirm this and have concluded that when there is an increase in the number of alcohol outlets there is a significant increase in the number of alcohol related car crashes, violent assaults, burglaries, underage drinking and college binge drinking. Studies have also demonstrated that increasing the outlets for the sale of wine increase access and consumption of alcohol. In February, 2000 a study was conducted that examined the relationship between geographic density of alcohol outlets and the number of alcohol related hospital admissions. The result specifically showed an increase of one liquor outlet per population of 10,000 led to an increase of 48 hospital admissions due to alcohol related morbidity. Numerous studies have concluded that there is a strong association between alcohol outlet density and violent crime. A study done in Newark, New Jersey found that alcohol outlet density was the single greatest predictor of violent crime. The National Commission Against Drunk Driving listed its first suggestion for reducing Chronic Drunk Driving as *Limiting Availability of Alcohol. Reduce alcohol density on a geographical and per capital basis.*
2. Underage drinkers consume wine. The majority of underage drinkers prefer a taste that is sweet and fruity. This describes a large variety of inexpensive bulk wines that will be available in these new license venues. The ballot initiative currently defines "food stores" in a manner that is not only applicable to grocery stores, but also gas stations, mini-marts and convenience stores. According to the study entitled Sources of Alcohol for Underage Drinkers, which was published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol, "a clear consensus among college-aged individuals was that it was easier to purchase alcohol from convenience stores than other types of alcohol outlets." By law, package stores in Massachusetts may not employ anyone less than 18 years of age. Underage persons are not allowed in package stores without adult supervision. "Food stores" regularly employ 15 to 16 year olds who are more easily persuaded by peer pressure to facilitate the sale and/or theft of alcoholic beverages. An example of teen ingenuity is the recent incidents of replacing soda packaging with beer and ringing them out through the self service aisle. Even the "food store" representatives have admitted that soon the intent will be to increase the licenses to sell beer and other alcohol. The fact is indisputable that increasing access to alcohol (wine) will increase underage alcohol consumption. Enforcement of violations for selling alcohol to minors will be less effective because the markets only stand to lose the revenue from a small "convenience department" of their total sales. Package stores are closed as the result of a serious violation.

3. Package stores DO NOT have a monopoly on wine sales. Current Massachusetts liquor law allows any individual or corporation to own a MAXIMUM of 3 ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSES. Stop & Shop, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, Cumberland Farms, 7-Eleven may own as many alcoholic beverage licenses as any package store in Massachusetts. Several "food stores" have had these licenses for years. With the new class of license to sell wine that may only be issued to "food stores" the monopoly scenario clearly favors the "food stores." 2800 new licenses will not be available for package stores. The spokeswoman for the Massachusetts Food Association said she could not promise that the grocery stores would not try to expand their offerings to include beer and other alcohol.
4. Wine in food stores does not necessarily result in lower prices and increased selection. Large national chains routinely meet with suppliers to strategize how to sell more products with less choice for consumers (volume vs. less SKU's.) Selection is a service offered to the consumer that comes at an increased cost to the retailer. Independently owned stores are local and in touch with the needs of the consumer. Independently owned stores are responsive to requests for the community's charitable causes and active in local government and civic organizations. Prices are competitive among local package stores because they must win the consumers confidence and loyalty. Operating independently requires more accountability.
5. Wine goes with food. WINE IS NOT FOOD. The "wine is equal to food" idea is just not realistic. The fact is that wine is alcohol and we can not become lax in the distribution of this sensitive product. The sale of alcohol needs sensible regulations and guidelines that consider the devastating repercussions of misuse and or abuse of the products.

INITIATIVE PETITION TO ALLOW FOOD STORES TO SELL WINE

Police Departments should be aware that the Massachusetts Food Association for Consumer Convenience in Wine Sales is attempting to get an initiative petition on the November ballot which would allow any store in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that sells food to be allowed to also sell wine. While our Association has not taken a position on this article as of this writing, we have met with both sides and feel that our members should be informed of some of the competing interests. It should be pointed out that many of the states around Massachusetts already allow all supermarkets and convenience stores to sell both beer and wine, and I am not aware of any articles raising concerns by other law enforcement agencies. As law enforcement administrators in Massachusetts, we should, however, consider several issues:

1. If the wine industry is successful in the initiative petition, we can be sure that the beer producers will be right behind doing the same thing.
2. We all need to be aware that the beer and wine producers have been attempting to pass this legislation in the Massachusetts Legislature for many years and have been turned down. Therefore, the industry is taking the issue directly to the voters in an attempt to by-pass the Legislature and their primary reason for doing so is stated as "convenience".

As investigators for local licensing officials, we all must be aware of the direct impact that this will have on each of our communities. While the petition appears to allow for a local option in each community, it still has the direct impact of dramatically increasing the number of alcoholic licenses in each of our communities. The basic formula as proposed would grant an immediate five additional wine licenses in every community and would then allow an additional license for each 5,000 resident population. As an example, in my community it would allow eleven additional licenses.

There are several issues that we must consider on both a local and statewide level:

1. While some people might argue that wine is generally used as an "adult" beverage, those of us in law enforcement clearly understand that our young people today use a great deal of wine to be part of the in crowd. Any public comment or concept that the wine will not be used by underage drinkers is not realistic.

2. Municipalities currently use various investigative methods for stakeouts and sting operations of package stores. We will not be able to use these methods of investigative enforcement in grocery stores as we will not have the same level of probable cause when observing patrons leaving a grocery store with a closed package.
3. With the modernization of technology, we would have to make sure that our local stores take appropriate action to prevent purchases at the "self-checkout" areas.
4. A concern that I have seen in the past in my own community is the great number of high school students who work in many of our supermarkets and convenience stores.
5. Unlike a package store which is given a local suspension that requires them to close for a certain number of days, this local penalty would not be available in convenience stores or supermarkets, whereas they may be permitted to just close down a single aisle in the store. This would present an additional burden on law enforcement for supervision.

I would be interested in knowing the thoughts of other chiefs and any concerns or lack of concern that you may have on this issue. Please send me an E-mail and let me know your thoughts.

Continued on page 2

FOR POLICE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LICENSING BOARDS

PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY FROM QUESTION 1

This fall, large foreign-owned grocery and convenience store chains will try to convince Massachusetts consumers to approve a ballot initiative that would increase the current number of liquor licenses in the state by almost 3,000, more than doubling the current number of outlets. All of this will be done in the name of "convenience." When it comes to the safety of our families, friends and communities it is responsibility, not convenience that is most important. This is a dangerous initiative. Protect your community by voting no on 1.

Control and enforcement

- Not only grocery stores but convenience stores, drug stores and even some gas stations will be able to secure this new class of license

- National grocery and convenience store chains do NOT have the incentive to police underage drinking.

- Wine sales only represent a small segment of their bottom line
- They face no meaningful penalty if caught, violations will lead to the temporary closure of their wine sections, unlike package store owners whose livelihoods are jeopardized by the temporary store closure guaranteed by a violation
- They are not integrated, conscientious members of the community
- In other states, grocery stores fail to stop underage buyers 25 - 30% of the time, almost double the rate of package stores

Increased availability/outlet density leads to **increases in alcohol-related abuses and incidents.**

- Greater numbers of alcohol-related injury
- Strong associations between alcohol outlet density and violent crime
- Greater numbers of alcoholism, cirrhosis and other alcohol-related diseases
- Increased liquor law violations, increases in underage drinking
- These stores employ fifteen and sixteen year olds who will now have easy access to alcoholic beverages
- More police personnel and time will be necessary to regulate the industry and deal with the increase in alcohol related problems causing significant budgetary problems.
- The petition, as worded, mandates the creation of these licenses.
- Many grocery stores now have self-checkout lanes. Situations have already occurred where violations have been committed. How will the sale of alcohol be controlled?
- Independent package stores will lose sales of their highest profit item. Many will go out of business, not paying their annual renewal fee to operate. Cities and towns will lose these revenues, along with property taxes.

Local Boards and employees will NOT have the same influence over giant foreign and domestic companies that they do over local businesses.

PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

A question has been put on the Massachusetts November ballot that will dramatically change the way liquor is sold in the State. Question 1 if passed would **DOUBLE** the liquor licenses in MA, with **NO** funding for increased enforcement.

The question asks voters to allow over 2,800 new alcohol licenses to be issued by the state of Massachusetts. Initially these new licenses will be for wine only.

- The grocers will be spending millions of dollars talking about how "convenient" it will be to pick-up a bottle of wine with your groceries.
- What they won't tell you is that should this bill pass, in addition to grocery stores, virtually every convenience store, drug store and even some gas stations will be able to sell alcohol. In fact, we've heard that one drug store chain has already prepared three hundred applications.
- One of the biggest risks to this proposed new system is underage drinking. The primary purpose behind Massachusetts' package store system is to ensure that the sale of liquor to the underage is strictly controlled. There is strict enforcement and tight penalties. And package store owners are committed to working with local law enforcement and the ABCC to prevent the sale of alcohol to the underage.
- Many convenience stores and drug stores employ fifteen and sixteen year olds. They would have easy access to alcoholic beverages, and would be put in the position of having to refuse to sell (or provide) alcohol to their classmates.
- Kids do drink wine, especially if it is more readily available than beer. Sting operations done in other states show that grocery stores and convenience stores fail to stop underage buyers 25% to 30% of the time. This is almost double the rate of dedicated liquor stores.
- Oh, by the way, they also won't tell you about the research that shows the effects of increasing the availability of alcohol. So here it is.... Research shows that when you increase the number of retail outlets selling alcohol there is a significant increase in underage drinking, college binge drinking, crime and alcohol related car crashes.
- There are no provisions made to increase the budget for enforcement of double the number of licenses. This burden would be placed on local law enforcement, and existing ABCC (Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission) staff, both already straining from underfunding. The **ONLY** financial benefit of the new system will be the profits that go to the supermarket and convenience store chains' owners.
- In addition, local businesses and their employees will be hurt. Many liquor stores will go out of business. The ones that survive will be forced to layoff employees. We estimate that 3,000 to 4,000 Massachusetts residents will lose their jobs.
- Maybe the current system isn't perfect but for the most part it works. Please, when you go to the ballot box in November, protect your children and support the local businesses that have been supporting the community for so many years. **VOTE NO** to "wine in food stores".

Q. Is the Wine at Food Stores Initiative needed?

No, consumers in Massachusetts are fortunate to have over 2,200 locations throughout the state to purchase wine. Many stores carry thousands of different varieties of wine and have well educated staffs to assist shoppers in making their selection. As a matter of fact, there are about twice as many package stores as there are grocery stores. You might say it is actually more convenient to buy wine than groceries.

Q. How many new licenses would be created statewide?

Approximately 2,900 new off-premise licenses would be created. That's more than double the current number of off-premise licenses. An off-premise license authorizes alcohol to be sold through a retail store location as opposed to an on-premise license for a bar or restaurant. The Massachusetts Food Association is trying to trick Massachusetts voters by saying it's only a 10% increase in licenses. They're including the 7,500 licenses issued to bars and restaurants in their calculations. That's just plain shameful.

Q. Isn't it true that grocery stores can sell wine?

Yes, in fact many already do sell wine as well as beer and liquor. They just need to abide by the current laws that insure the safe distribution of alcohol.

Q. Then what's this all about?

This is about Ahold, a foreign corporation headquartered in the Netherlands, which owns Stop & Shop along with other food stores trying to increase their profits without regard for public safety. What the grocery store chains and big box stores want to do is drive local package stores out of business and monopolize the market.

Q. Do package stores have a monopoly on wine sales?

No. That's part of the misinformation the food association is using to confuse Massachusetts voters. If you think about it, it's kind of a ridiculous statement. The current law does not allow any one individual or corporation to own more than three package stores. So we actually have just the opposite of a monopoly. Independent local business people predominantly own package stores. A near monopoly is what will be created if the initiative passes. The three-license limit would no longer apply. So a convenient store chain that employs primarily fifteen and sixteen year olds could acquire close to three hundred licenses.

Q. Will the initiative lead to lower prices or an increase in selection?

No, that's another piece of misinformation the Food Association is feeding the public. Prices will actually increase over time and your choice of products will be greatly reduced. Just walk into any grocery store or convenience store that sells alcohol today. The selection is very limited and their prices are generally higher than package stores. If the Food Association is successful in their efforts to drive local package stores out of business that's what we'll end up with; higher prices and a poorer selection of products.

Q. Will convenience stores be able to get these new licenses?

Yes, actually the majority or close to 2,000 of these licenses would go to convenience stores, drug stores and even some gas stations. According to the Food Association only

about one-third will go to supermarkets. All any of these stores need to do is carry certain types of grocery items. Most of these stores already qualify.



Q. Will this lead to increases in underage drinking?

Yes, for a couple of reasons. First of all these type of stores employ fifteen and sixteen year olds who will now have easy access to alcohol and be responsible for policing their classmates. Secondly, numerous sting operations done throughout the country prove that grocery stores and convenience stores fail to stop underage buyers at a much higher rate than dedicated package stores. In fact, in a recent sting operation, convenience stores failed to stop underage buyers 52% of the time versus 15% for dedicated package stores. Those kinds of results are typical. Grocery stores and convenience stores just don't have the same incentive as package stores to stop underage buyers. If a package store is caught their whole store is closed down whereas a convenience or grocery store would just have to close down an aisle.

Q. Are there other safety issues I should be concerned with?

Yes, there is a large body of research which shows that increasing the number of retail outlets selling alcohol dramatically increases; consumption, alcohol related car crashes, violent crimes, underage drinking and college binge drinking. For more information go to www.wineballet.com and click on research.



Q. Is it true the kids don't drink wine?

Any of us could probably answer that question on our own. When I was a kid Boones Farm Apple wine was one of my first drinks. Today their drinking box wines, jug wines, and fruit infused wines like Wild Vines and Arbor Mist. Kids aren't picky they'll drink whatever is most convenient. Anyway the proof is in the research, a recent study shows that 50% of kids in grades seven through twelve drink wine. Of course the Food Association knows this and is shamefully trying to hide this information from voters. They have no problem sacrificing the safety of our children to increase their profits.

Q. Will local licensing authorities have control over issuing these licenses?

Technically yes, but in reality they will have no control. If a store qualifies and the local licensing authority turns them down lawsuits will arise and the city or town will be forced to issue the license.

Q. Who will pay for the costs associated with policing these new licenses?

You will if you're a taxpayer in Massachusetts. The cost to the state for policing these new licenses and for dealing with the increases in drunk driving, underage drinking and crime could top one hundred million dollars. The money generated through new licenses will be about three million dollars. The difference eventually will have to be covered through tax increases.